

Because of their status, immigrants are often scared to report crimes of violence. This fear results in more damage to their communities as the violence escalates. But law enforcement has the powerful tool to combat these crimes—the U visa program, which protects immigrants if they report abuse.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT REAUTHORIZATION

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, during my first term in Congress, I proudly voted for the Violence Against Women Act. It saddens me that 20 years later, in my last term, my Republican colleagues are determined to water down and undermine this landmark legislation. Of all things that shouldn't be partisan, this is it—the need to help those who suffer injuries at the hands of someone who supposedly loves them.

As we've seen many times, the majority seems to like playing politics with women's health and safety. And because they rarely miss an opportunity to exclude LGBT Americans from important rights and benefits, they're saying that if you're a woman who is in a relationship with another woman, then you don't deserve the same protection against domestic abuse or sexual assault.

We need to be doing more, not less on this issue. I have a bill that would extend family-leave benefits to victims of domestic violence. It's H.R. 3151. Why don't we take up that bill instead of this divisive measure that rolls back historic progress?

Vote 'no' on H.R. 4970.

#### VOTE "NO" ON H.R. 4970, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 4970, this misguided GOP reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

Unfortunately, this bill does not do enough to protect the well-being of all women. I say again that it does not do enough to protect the well-being of all women.

This reauthorization jeopardizes the safety of our Native American women and also the safety of many undocumented women. Neither the manager's amendment nor the underlying bill addresses the problems that face Indian country. Instead of empowering tribal police and courts to stop domestic violence, this legislation unfairly places the burden on Native victims. Many of the victims of domestic violence that live on the reservations are unable to hire legal counsel and can't travel hundreds of miles to Federal courts to petition for protection orders.

We must protect sovereignty. We must respect sovereignty. Tribal courts are the best authorities to issue domestic violence orders of protection on reservations.

Let's stop this partisan bill. Let's work together on a new approach that values the safety of Native Americans and undocumented individuals in a bipartisan fashion.

#### WE STILL HAVE WORK TO DO

(Ms. BONAMICI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, it's truly unfortunate that we're here today talking about the possibility of voting against the Violence Against Women Act. This bill was originally passed and has been consistently reauthorized with strong bipartisan support, but it now faces unnecessary hurdles.

There has been a drop in annual rates of domestic violence since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act, but we still have work to do. Alarmingly, one in four women and one in seven men have been victims of domestic violence in their lifetime, but the current bill is not the way to move forward.

Unlike the companion bill that passed in the Senate with strong bipartisan support, this House bill will take us backwards. It eliminates protections for immigrants dependent on and exploited by their spouses, keeping them trapped in violent relationships. It could let perpetrators of sexual violence against Native American women off the hook, and it utterly fails to recognize that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, including those in same-sex relationships.

Every time we reauthorize an act of Congress, we have an opportunity to improve. Improvement, not further harming victims, should be our focus with the reauthorization.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT

(Ms. BORDALLO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4970, the so-called Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. I believe that all Americans are entitled to feel safe, and we must strengthen current laws to continue to protect women and children across our country. This bill, however, does not achieve that goal. Immigrants, native tribes, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender groups are some of our most vulnerable communities, and the bill rolls back years of progress improving Federal efforts against domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

The bill eliminates important confidentiality protections for self-petitions and would put immigrant women

at greater risk for repeat abuses by undermining the intent of U visas. This bill discourages crime victims from cooperating with law enforcement and eliminates any attempt at a stable life by terminating their eligibility for permanent residence.

Women in this country, regardless of their background, should never have to feel trapped or helpless.

#### A SHAMEFUL BILL

(Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I never could have anticipated speaking in opposition to the Violence Against Women Act, and it's unfortunate that we've come to this point, but here we are. This comes after more than a year of bipartisan efforts to put together a comprehensive, effective, and much-needed VAWA draft. But Republicans in the Senate and then in the House decided to ignore the recommendations of the FBI, the Department of Justice, and advocacy groups on the ground and push a version of VAWA that endangers immigrant women and children, ignores the needs of our native communities, and perpetuates discrimination against LGBT victims. That is why hundreds of victim services organizations oppose this bill, and I stand with them today.

At the Women in Distress shelter in my district, there has been a 39 percent increase in requests for services over the last year. Women need us now more than ever, and this is not the time to allow for discrimination or helping only some victims of domestic violence. This is the time to take a stand.

As lawmakers, we speak for the voiceless, and today I speak united with my colleagues in opposition to this shameful bill.

#### I STAND WITH VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(Ms. WATERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, today I stand with my Democratic colleagues and victims of domestic violence across our Nation in strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the House Republican alternative to the Violence Against Women Reauthorization bill. This bill severely undermines vital protections available to victims of violence and places those victims in danger of continued abuse.

Since its enactment in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act, known as VAWA, has a long history of uniting lawmakers with the common purpose of protecting survivors of domestic violence.

Each year across the Nation, thousands of women, children, and men who fall victim to domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking no longer